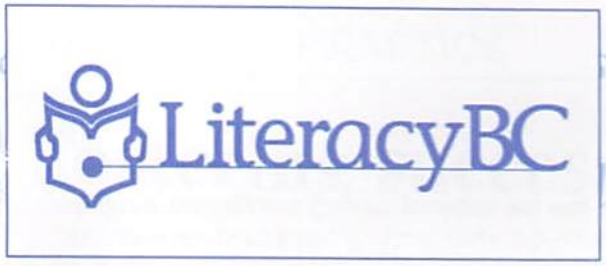

Annual Report 2006-07

promoting and supporting literacy and learning since 1990

a message FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friend of Literacy,

It has been an exciting year at Literacy BC. We have launched many new initiatives and continued to work in partnership with practitioners, researchers and funders towards the goal of making British Columbia the most literate jurisdiction in North America. One of the most notable initiatives has been the provincial government's ReadNow Action Plan. Literacy BC is a leading partner on this initiative, which includes a resource directory of literacy programs, services and contacts across the province. Via the telephone or the internet, learners and practitioners can readily find the resources they seek in their own areas.

Literacy BC is partnered with Literacy Now and numerous practitioners throughout the province to develop monitoring and assessment benchmarks for adult literacy learners in community-based programs.

Those involved in family literacy can now upgrade their knowledge through the Family Literacy Certificate. This is another example of what can be achieved through partnerships. Literacy BC, the Centre for Family Literacy and 2010 Legacies Now all partnered with Vancouver Community College to bring this innovative training to fruition.

As a grassroots organization, Literacy BC was delighted to add a learner advocate component to its Summer Institute this year. Many learners who are moving on to leadership roles in literacy joined tutors and practitioners to develop their skills to enhance literacy programming throughout the province.

This year saw the debut of Literacy and Beyond, a highly successful event which not only helps fund our work, but raises the profile of literacy, bringing our message to a wider audience.

As we move into another year, our primary goal remains advocating for opportunities which allow all British Columbians to acquire the skills they need to thrive in their chosen paths. We will continue to do this by developing partnerships, supporting Regional Literacy Coordinators, making our resources available to communities across the province, continuing research projects to ensure we can inform and support literacy initiatives, and influencing policy which affects the literacy field.

As you will see from our enclosed financial statements, we are in good shape to continue our work. We are being recognized by different levels of government, which count on us to carry through the literacy projects they finance; we have community supporters who have put their faith in us; and we are, with the help of our membership, responsibly carrying out our mandate to help British Columbians keep pace with literacy demands.

Thank you for your continued support of and work in literacy.

Marilyn MacDonald
President

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Fostering success from the ground up

Community-based literacy benchmarking project breaks new ground

Literacy BC, in partnership with Literacy Now, recently led a project to develop a province-wide system for monitoring and assessing the progress of adults in community-based literacy programs. Phase 1 proposes a set of benchmarks and an approach to monitoring and assessment that is consistent with the philosophy and capacity of community-based adult literacy programming – a values-based approach.

The project was informed by the contributions of an advisory committee of adult literacy professionals and by consultation with Regional Literacy Coordinators and others in the field. The Phase 1 report was presented to the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, which commissioned and funded the project. It offers a series of recommendations to move the project forward in 2007/08 through training, fieldtesting, and finally implementation, envisioned for late 2008.

The project is intended to supply common learning measurement standards for community-based programs, presently lacking, and to prepare the ground for connecting to a future common framework among the different sectors providing literacy programs. The report makes clear that it is neither necessary nor desirable to have a single set of benchmarks to assess learner progress, but that a 'behind the scenes' common framework that enables a comprehensive overview of improvements in provincial literacy levels should be developed.

Summer Literacy Institute 2007
Looking with new eyes

Literacy BC is always seeking new ways to engage literacy learners in practice and public advocacy, and to represent their experiences and perspectives. Promoting this important agenda, the pioneering 2007 Summer Institute brought together 100 learners, tutors, practitioners and researchers for an intensive collection of courses, workshops and cutting-edge online conferencing focused on **leadership development**.

The Institute examined the meaning of leadership in the contexts of literacy practice, lifelong learning, human and social capital and learning communities. Participants chose from adult learner, volunteer tutor or literacy practitioner leadership courses facilitated by respected field leaders Kate Nonesuch, Ellen Szita, Jennifer Cliff-Marks, Margaret Sutherland, Ron Faris and Adrian Blunt. Workshops, supported by Canadian Council on Learning Knowledge Centres, concentrated on themes of Adult, Health, Aboriginal, Workplace and Early Childhood Learning.

Getting the most out of research

On January 25, 2007 Literacy BC facilitated a research mobilization forum to explore the connections between policy research and community literacy practice, and to cultivate mutual understanding and esteem between researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

Participants from the literacy community, provincial and federal government departments, and educational and research institutions met at the Vancouver Public Library to explore the connections between research and community literacy development. Issues included: How can research be mobilized more effectively in the formulation of policy? Is it adequately informing community initiatives? To what extent is it meeting end-user needs, and what are the gaps? Who needs to be involved in addressing gaps? What resources do they need? What outcomes are appropriate for assessment?

Discussion was stimulated by a focus on two evolving tools – the Composite Learning Index and the Lifecourse Analysis Framework – promising greater sophistication and sensitivity in measuring community conditions for learning.

Literacy BC gratefully acknowledges the support for this event provided by the Canadian Council on Learning and the Province through the Ministry of Education.

Expanding the literacy toolkit

Literacy practitioners attending Literacy BC's November training sessions were introduced to a groundbreaking tool for assessing and communicating the conditions for learning in Canadian communities. Charles Ungerleider, Director of Research and Knowledge Mobilisation with the Canadian Council on Learning, delivered a concise and accessible overview of the **Composite Learning Index**. A DVD of the presentation is now available (contact mcampbell@literacy.bc.ca).

Peter Mansbridge hosts two events that raise close to $100,000 for literacy

On July 9th 2007, CBC Chief Correspondent Peter Mansbridge hosted Literacy & Beyond, a star-studded wine and food event at beyond restaurant + lounge in Vancouver. VIPs included Senator Larry Campbell, Premier Gordon Campbell, and CBC personalities including Rick Cluff, Gloria Macarenko, Shelagh Rogers, Cecilia Walters, Jurgen Gothe, Fred Lee and more.

Almost 200 guests gathered to sip, swirl and savour BC's finest wines in support of literacy, while sampling mouth-watering fare from beyond restaurant, against a backdrop of jazz from Vancouver's Amanda Tosoff Trio. Peter Mansbridge and Premier Gordon Campbell each spoke, sharing humorous anecdotes and more serious thoughts about their passion for helping people attain strong literacy skills. The event raised almost $30,000 to support Literacy BC.

Literacy & Beyond preceded the legendary **17th annual PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy BC** founded by Peter Gzowski, held on July 10th. With the help of host Peter Mansbridge, "Celebrity Putter" Ross Rebagliati, Senator Larry Campbell, CBC's Rick Cluff, generous sponsors, including Mercer Human Resource Consulting and Marsh Canada, and the 140 golfers, the 2007 PGI raised almost $70,000.

A highlight of the PGI was the presentation of the Co-operators Learner Achievement Award, which recognizes the outstanding achievements of an adult learner in BC. This year's recipient was Rav Bal of Nanaimo who, at 27, went back to school and overcame significant learning challenges to achieve first class marks. Rav is now working on completing his grade 12 academic subjects, after which he plans to train as a power-line technician.

CBC's Jurgen Gothe (right) at one of the Literacy & Beyond wine-tasting tables

Rick Cluff (CBC's The Early Edition), Premier Gordon Campbell and CBC Chief Correspondent Peter Mansbridge at Literacy & Beyond

Literacy & Beyond guests Caroline Best, Senator Larry Campbell, CBC's Gloria Macarenko and Peter Armstrong of the Armstrong Group

Peter Mansbridge and Ross Rebagliati at the PGI

2007 Co-operators Learner Achievement Award recipient Rav Bal (centre), with Peter Mansbridge and Peter Podovinikoff of the Co-operators

BC Literacy Directory goes live

September 7th, 2007 saw the launch of a brand new online resource for people seeking information on suitable learning opportunities. The BC Literacy Directory helps users identify and contact suitable lifelong literacy, skills upgrading and ESL programs and supports in their communities.

This comprehensive site has been developed with the assistance of the Ministry of Education in support of the province's ReadNow Action Plan. A convenient alternative to our toll-free hotline, it has been designed to be as accessible and user-friendly as possible for people with low literacy.

The BC Literacy Directory will be valuable not only for learners and their advocates, but also for volunteers, professionals and researchers in the field interested in the services that are available in their district and across BC.

As well as retrieving program information, visitors can add or edit data and review the most popular search terms. Check out the Directory at www.literacybc.ca/directory.

1-888-READ-234

Beginning February 2007, with the support of the Ministry of Education, Literacy BC expanded its longstanding toll-free information and referral service. The service now encompasses literacy programs for all stages of life, as well as areas such as ESL. Interpreters in all the most commonly-spoken languages in BC are available on-call if required. A new, easier-to-remember number was also introduced.

Literacy BC works closely with Regional Literacy Co-ordinators and relevant program providers to research and identify the resources that best meet callers' needs. We are also collecting detailed information on the nature of the services callers are interested in, in order better to inform decision-making and program delivery. In the first seven months of operation we serviced more than 200 calls from learners, their families and advocates, and people wishing to volunteer as literacy tutors.

Resource Centre doubles output

Literacy BC maintains one of the largest literacy resource and lending libraries in the country, containing almost 4,000 items. This specialized collection of literacy materials is available to instructors, tutors, researchers, policymakers, learners and the general public throughout BC. Users borrowed more than 650 items, twice as many as in the previous year, and made almost 100 research requests.

During the past year, we focused on making our resources more easily accessible. We accomplished this through outreach activities at literacy events and by creating resource lists on particular topics of interest. Library staff showcased new resources and taught tutors strategies for accessing and evaluating relevant learning materials. An online tutorial can be found on our website. There are also resource lists on various topics such as health literacy.

Efforts to build the collection focused on the areas of learner assessment, learning disabilities, program evaluation, and instructional and learner materials. The Resource Centre continues to respond to the literacy field's expressed needs for resources to support literacy instruction, programming, research, and professional development and lifelong learning. Visit our website for online access to our collection.

In 2006-2007, Literacy BC distributed $8,400 to 26 community-based adult learning centres through the Gallagher Community Access Fund.

Supporting regional coordination

Literacy BC provides leadership, resources and support to Regional Literacy Coordinators across the province. The goals of the *Regional Literacy Coordination and Development Initiative* are to build networks of support at the regional level and provide "closer to home" information, resources, leadership and training to literacy programs, practitioners and communities.

Regional Literacy Coordinators

Camosun/Victoria	Amanda Leslie-Spinks
Capilano	Michelle Lebeau & Sandy Middleton
Cariboo	Shelley Joyner
East Kootenay	Ali Wassing
Fraser Valley	Julia Dodge
Lower Mainland	TBA
Malaspina	June Hughes
New Caledonia	Rebecca Beuschel
Northwest	Dee McRae
North Island	Judy Brooks
Northern Lights	Christabelle Kux-Kardos
Okanagan	Leslie Kiehlbauch
Selkirk	Jennifer Cliff-Marks

In 2006-2007, Literacy BC distributed $8,752 in financial assistance to 22 part-time adult learners through the PACE Bursary Fund.

Raising Readers

The 2006 CanWest Global Raise-a-Reader campaign had a phenomenal impact, raising $2.24 million for literacy across Canada. Literacy BC was a major beneficiary, receiving $100,000 which we distributed to 60 family literacy programs across the province. This funding supports the learning of thousands of parents and their children.

Raise-A-Reader is growing steadily every year, and Literacy BC continues to work closely with the CanWest organisation in our province to ensure that funds raised are directed effectively to the communities and families where they will make a real difference.

The Word on the Street 2006

The 12th annual Word on the Street festival attracted an estimated 35,000 people to the tents and tables of a record 150 exhibitors around the Vancouver Public Library. Literacy BC coordinated the Starbucks Family Literacy tent, and was as delighted as ever to be involved with this grassroots celebration of literacy and the many fun, free, family-friendly activities and events that filled the day.

Families tell their stories

At learning centres throughout the province, Literacy BC has teamed up with Word on the Street to distribute journals that learners are using to record and share their family stories. Over 500 adult learners and their families are collecting stories, anecdotes, poems, newspaper clippings, photographs and other material. Adults working to upgrade their literacy skills use the journals as launch pads to explore literacy with their families.

Diverse groups of learners in 20 literacy and learning centres are participating, including young mothers, recent immigrants, and First Nations elders. The journals will compose a rich repository of experiences, to be celebrated at the Word on the Street Festival in September 2007.

People learn better when they practice their skills in contexts and on tasks that are meaningful in their lives. The Family Stories Project is a proven success and an example of the innovative approaches that are helping family literacy programs become increasingly recognized as effective models for addressing our province's literacy challenge.

Family Literacy Week 2007
A strong platform for family literacy

In January each year, Literacy BC organises a series of events to engage the community and raise awareness of the power of family literacy. This year, several exceptional events helped make for a memorable Family Literacy Week.

The week opened with a well-attended workshop (January 22) exploring the innovative **LEAP BC** (Literacy Education Activity and Play) program developed by the Ministry of Education. LEAP promotes literacy in children up to age 5 by integrating language skills with play, as well as providing parents, caregivers and educators with resources to encourage physical activity and healthy eating. Fiona Morrison and Marion Taylor (2010 Legacies Now) conducted the workshop.

In a penetrating discussion (January 24), **'Raising the Critical Thinking Child in the Cyber Age'**, noted Canadian youth author Shari Graydon and two teacher-librarians addressed the critical thinking skills kids need to function in the digital era. **Write On!** (January 27) was an exciting afternoon of literacy activities for children aged 5-12, featuring authors Bob Heidbreder (*I Wished for a Unicorn*) and Melanie Jackson (Dinah Galloway Mystery Series).

The **Breakfast of Champions** (January 26 at Vancouver Public Library) celebrated the many individuals, corporations and organizations that champion family literacy throughout the year. Education Minister Shirley Bond and renowned children's author Robert Munsch addressed the gathering of over 200 people. The breakfast also featured keynote speakers Dr Paul Cappon (Canadian Council on Learning), who announced the first annual report on the State of Learning in Canada, and Peter Hicks (Human Resources and Social Development Canada), who discussed the application to literacy issues of new techniques in policy analysis.

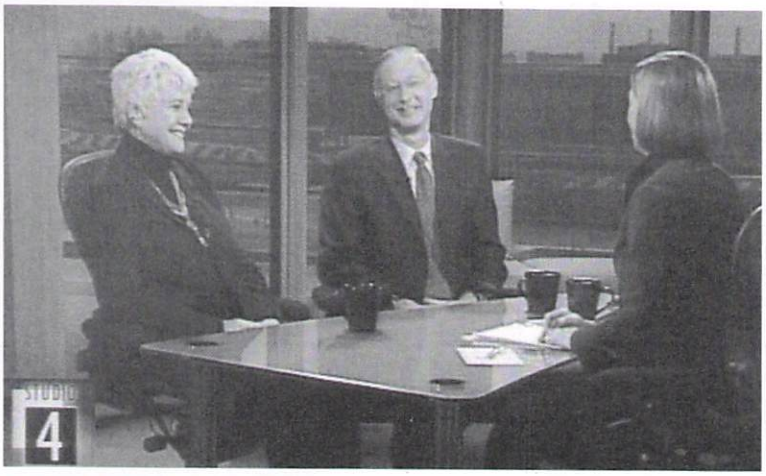
Literacy BC thanks the many people and organisations that champion family literacy. We thank our many partners, including Vancouver Public Library, and sponsors including Listel Hotel, Panago and Starbucks.

Innovative credential launched

Canada's first **Family Literacy Certificate Program** was launched in April by Literacy BC in partnership with Vancouver Community College, the Centre for Family Literacy and 2010 Legacies Now.

The program offers a cutting-edge curriculum facilitated by leaders in the field. Participants benefit from customized professional development focused on the skills, knowledge and proven practices that help parents support their children's learning and improve their own literacy and parenting skills. This innovative initiative greatly strengthens capacity in a critical and fast-growing area of literacy practice.

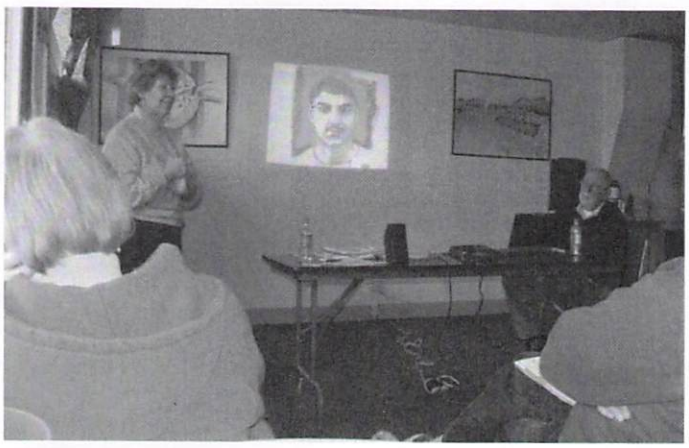
Some highlights in pictures of Literacy BC's awareness-raising activities this year ...

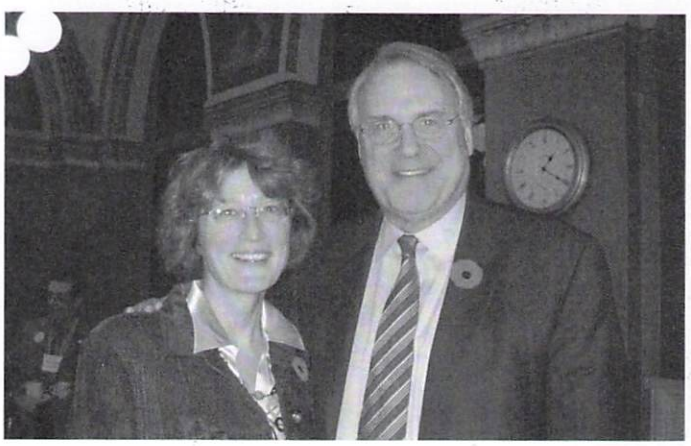


(Left) Learner champion and Literacy BC representative Ellen Szita (left), with Paul Cappon of the Canadian Council on Learning, appeared on Fanny Kiefer's popular TV show during Family Literacy Week to share her experiences and her views on the importance of investment in literacy.

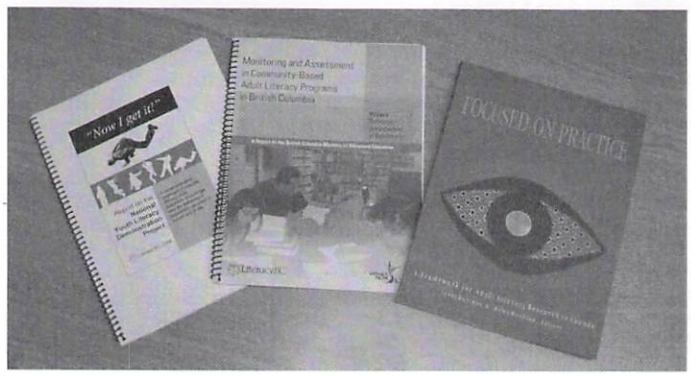
(l-r) Store Manager Scott Sampson, Chief Supervisor Christina Harper and District Manager Ferdinand Heyde welcomed a full house to Friends & Family Night at a new Starbucks in Langley. Refreshments were by donation, and almost $400 was raised to support the work of Literacy BC.

(Below) In March, the New School research team (Jim Powrie and Heide Wrigley) and Literacy BC's Diana Twiss travelled to Campbell River, Hazelton, Smithers and Houston to talk to practitioners about how the promising practices of the New School youth literacy model could be adapted to meet the needs of their communities.





Literacy BC Executive Director Cynthia Whitaker made a number of public presentations on a variety of literacy issues in 2006-07. Hon. Ken Dryden was one of many Members of Parliament she spoke with during Literacy Action Day (Novermber 9th, 2006) in Ottawa.


"Now I get it!"
Monitoring and Assessment in Community-Based Adult Literacy Programs in British Columbia
FOCUSED ON PRACTICE

Several of this year's publications will be of great interest and value to literacy practitioners, researchers and others. *Now I Get It* reports on the National Youth Literacy Demonstration Project. *Monitoring and Assessment in Community-Based Adult Literacy Programs* reports on Phase 1 of the benchmarking project described on page 2. *Focused on Practice* is a wide-ranging study and vindication of research in practice in adult literacy in Canada.

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acknowledgements and **THANKS**

Literacy BC gratefully acknowledges the many individuals and organizations that contribute time, energy, and money to support literacy and learning in BC. We would like to say a very special thank you to the people and organisations who made generous contributions this year.

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Donations Honour Linda Mitchell's Leadership in Literacy

On behalf of Linda and everyone at Literacy BC, we would like to say a special thank you to the many people who made a donation in honour of Linda Mitchell's retirement as Executive Director of Literacy BC. This generous support adds to Linda's legacy, sustaining this much-needed provincial literacy organization.

Joan Andersen; John Boraas (Camosun College); Marie-Luise Berryman; Suzanne Bolton; Gyda Chud; George Ditchburn; Ron Faris; John Friesen; Yvonne Hopp; Valerie Hunter; Stephanie Jewell; Chris Kelly; Diane Kirby; David Kuefler; Reg Labonte; Leslie Lindsay; Deborah McPhedran; Bill More; Loree Owen; Russ Pacey; Peter Podovinikoff; Thomas Quigley; Kristin Rabnett; Marg Rose; Joan Savoie; Audrey Thomas; Jan Weiten; Cynthia Whitaker; Susan Witter; Vancouver School Board.

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